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NOTES TO READER

- "AteYa" is someone who can find anything, but unfortunately, I just can't find the proper word to translate it, so I think I'll keep it like that. I'm very sorry for the mess in the first chapter *bow*.
- Term "prostitute" applies to the low-ranked prostitutes, "courtesan" for the high-ranked prostitutes, and "oiran" for the highest of the highest.
- Hachimonji is walking in the figure of 8. It has two types, one which is done inside the building (uchihachimonji), and the other one is done outside (sotohachimonji). There's a good example of how's it actually done in the J-drama called "JIN".
- If you want to learn more about Yoshiwara there's a well-written book by Dr. Cecilia Segawa Seigle, namely >> Yoshiwara: the glittering world of the Japanese courtesan. I read it a lot when I was working on this chapter, thus the dekay XD
- Mimi-nashi Houichi... gah it's long! Basically it's the story about a blind man whose ears were cut by a samurai ghost. Read the full story here >> http://www.sacred-texts.com/shi/kwaidan/kwai03.htm

RIDDLE.
THIS IS A RIDDLE.
SHOULD I BE RELIEVED YET?
HMPH
FU FU
ENTRUSTING THE DIFFICULT PART OF THIS TO THIS WOMAN...
SURELY ENOUGH, IF IT WASN'T FOR HER ECCENTRICITY
THERE'S NO WAY SHE'D TAKE THIS JOB
.....
COMES! IT COMES!! A BIG JOB AFTER AN ETERNITY!!
BRING IT ON, YOU BASTARDDDD!
HEY, CALM DOWN!!

TN: or maybe >> after a long while?

Chapter 2 - The Woman of Yoshiwara, Kagari

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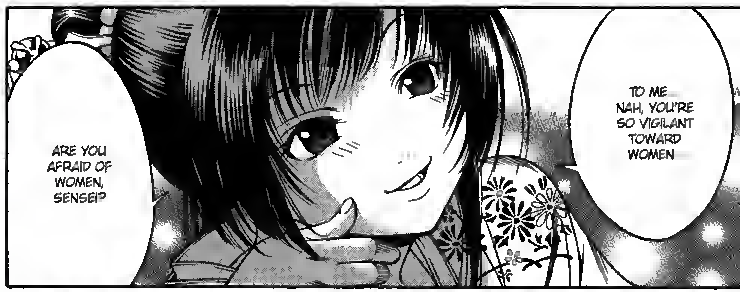
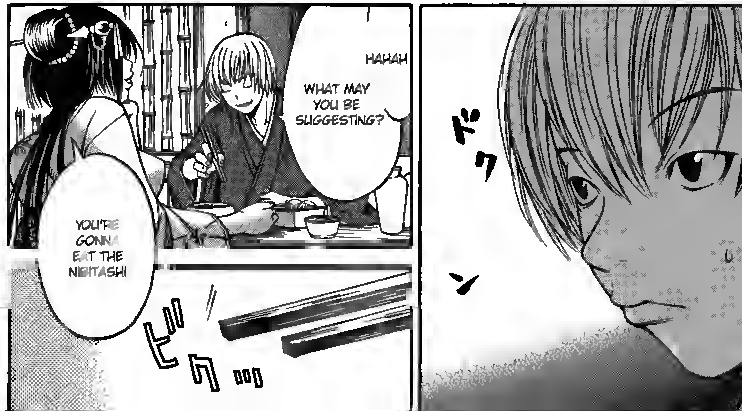
HEY, ATEYA NO TSUBAKI-SAN!
YOU SEEM TO BE ENJOYING YOURSELF, BUT,
I'm worried.
DO YOU UNDERSTAND THE SITUATION?
LOCATE THAT EAR, WILL YOU?
BUT OF COURSE!! THE BIZARRE MURDER OF AN EARLESS BEAUTY!!
THE MURDERED ETSU WAS A BEAUTY, WASN'T SHE??
WELL, YEAH
THOUGHT SO!! IT'LL BE BIZARRE IF SHE WASN'T!!
More reason to be worried.
A CASE FREAK...
shiver
THAT'S NOT IT!!
RIDDLES ARE MADE FROM PILES OF REASONS.
FINDING OUT THOSE REASONS IS SOMETHING I LOVE TO DO.

SENSEI, FOR A WHILE NOW, YOU'RE JUST LICKING YOUR SAKE INSTEAD OF GULPING IT DOWN.
SO WHY DO YOU DO THAT!?
T CAN'T BE HELPED THAT ONE'S FACE WILL GET RED WHILE DRINKING, BUT IT DOESN'T MEAN THAT ONE IS WEAK TO SAKE.
SUCH TRIVIAL REASON...
HEY!





T/N: Nitakoshi > boiled spinach and shitake mushrooms marinated in light soy broth.

NEXT IS THE TOFU
T/N Tofu >> soybean curd
MY VENTURE INTO YOUR MIND MADE YOU GETTING DRY YOUR THROAT IS AGITATED BUT SAKE IS A NO-GO
YOUR DESIRE OF THE SALAD WHICH HAS A LOT OF MOISTURE WAS CURIOUSLY GUESSED BY ME
GETTING UNEASY, YOU THEN SET YOUR HAND ON THE TOFU
THEN, LET'S CHANGE TO NIOTASHI! NO! HAS SHE READ IT TOO?
NO! NO...!
I CAN'T MOVE ...!
.....
Niotashi
AHAH! AREN'T YOU A COWARD, SENSEI!?
AND YET, YOU HATE TO LOSE!
UGH. SUCH EXCUSE...!
TO CUT THE BODY IN FRONT OF ONE'S EYES,
TO END THE LIFE.
EVEN WITHOUT KNOWING WHO'S THE OTHER PERSON, THE CULPRIT CERTAINLY HAS A REASON TO DO IT-
THAT'S WHY IT'S INTERESTING.

T/N: Kawara ban >> old Japanese newspapers

LOOK AT THE 11TH THE 27TH, AND THE 32ND SHEET FROM THE TOP.
THIS TYPE OF "COLLECTOR" IS LIKELY TO CONTINUE
HE JUST CAN'T STOP HIMSELF.
"TAP"
"TAP"

OH
"TAP"
THE AMOUNT OF 3 YEARS WORTH OF CASES, 2095 SHEETS IN TOTAL, ISN'T IT?
YOU REMEMBER ALL OF THEM!? YOU MUST BE KIDDING ME!!
WHAT KIND OF BRAIN DO YOU ACTUALLY HAVE?
OH, SHUT UP
IT'S BEYOND ANY DOUBT NOW,
SHE'S A FREAK!!
— I GUESS SHE IS AN EXCEPTION. EVEN THE CIVIL SERVICE HAS GIVEN UP.
NOBODY WANTS TO LOOK FOR SOMETHING LIKE THE EAR OF A MURDERED WOMAN, RIGHT?
THE FLOATING RUMOUR ABOUT THE "EARLESS WOMAN" MURDER.
THE FIRST VICTIM IS THE 16-YEAR OLD DAUGHTER OF NIHONBASHI'S NAKAMURA FAMILY, OMIYO.

EIGHT DAYS LATER, THE SECOND VICTIM OF THE "EARLESS WOMAN" MURDER
OKOU, 18-YEAR OLD DAUGHTER FROM NIHONBASHI'S KAME FAMILY
BESIDES BEING RECKLESSLY STABBED TO DEATH
THEIR LEFT EARS WERE ALSO SNATCHED
AND THE CULPRIT DID IT AGAIN ON ETSU LAST NIGHT. HUH?
AND THEN SURPRISINGLY ANOTHER CASE-
CRUNCH
?
HABIT, I GUESS?
AH.. THE SOUND OF HER CHEWING HER NAILS, HUH?
CRUNCH

SHE MAKES A VERY LOVELY FACE.
ぼきッ
HECK, IF SHE STAYS SILENT.
IMPUDENT TALK.. !!
ギリギリ
I CAN'T LET MY GUARD DOWN!
UGH!
WHAT ARE YOU DAY-DREAMING ABOUT?
SENSEI, DO YOU PLAN TO SPEND 80% OF YOUR LIFE UNCONSCIOUSLY?
TWO DAYS AFTER OMIYO'S HORRIBLE INCIDENT, THOUGH LOSING HER EAR...
A GIRL SURVIVED!
NOGIKU, A HAIRDRESSER FROM ASAKUSA, 19 YEARS OLD
ALTHOUGH THERE'S NO OTHER BIG WOUNDS,
SHE DOESN'T TALK MUCH, PROBABLY DUE TO HER TRAUMA.
THAT MEANS,
ETSU IS THE FOURTH ONE, HUH?

DID THE GIRL HAVE A DIFFICULT DELIVERY?
.....
PARDON?
THAT POOR NOGIKU!
DOES SHE HAVE SOME SPECIAL CIRCUM-STANCES? HER MOTHER?
AH, UMM
HER MOTHER DIED GIVING BIRTH TO HER
HER FATHER THEN IMMEDIATELY ELOPED NOGIKU HAS NO RELATIVES
HA!
YOU MEN ONLY THINK ABOUT SPREADING YOUR IDIOTIC CHILDREN EVERYWHERE!!
Lost in anger
AS I PREDICTED!
IDIOT BENEFACTORS!!
Rat
It appears that Tsubaki hates men.

She might get along with me who is bad with women, might she not?
CHUCKLE
WHAT'S SO FUNNY?
NO, NOTHING
A-ANYWAY, ABOUT THE EARS,
IT'S WRITTEN THAT ALL OF THE MURDERED WOMEN FAVOURED RURIMARU
IT'S NOT THERE
IF WE GO TO RURIMARU'S PLACE
WE'LL ONLY FIND HIS LOINCLOTH WHICH REEKS OF SEMEN.
!!!

T/N: loincloth > > A strap of cloth worn around the loins

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT, SENSEI!
WHY DO YOU...
THE CULPRIT,
THE MOTIVE TO SNATCH THE EARS,
THE EAR'S LOCATION,
AREN'T THEY ALREADY CLEAR?
SORRY FOR BEING A DIMWIT!!
BUT I WON'T GIVE TROUBLE TO THE WRONG PERSON!!
GIVEN THAT I WAS WRONG, RIGHT?
THAT'S BECAUSE SENSEI IS SUCH A DIMWIT
DON'T SAY SUCH AN IRRESPONSIBLE THING!!
WE HAVEN'T EXAMINED ANYTHING YET, RIGHT?

YOU JUST CAN'T SEE EVERYONE'S TRUTH AS A "REALITY"
TO GET ON WITH THE DREAM THE MURDERER SEES, THE EAR THE MURDERER HAD WILL BE SOMETHING TO ABANDON.
YOU REALLY
H/S SHE FIGURED IT OUT ALREADY? EVERYTHING??
THINGS THAT I CAN'T FIND ARE NAUGHT!
HA!
WHY, I'M AN ATEYA AFTER ALL.

SMELLS ROGUE!!
THIS WOMAN IS NO GOOD!!
I'VE FIGURED IT OUT AT LAST!
IF WE DON'T TAKE BACK THE EAR QUICKLY, IT'LL DECAY!!
HAA
I'M NOT TOO SURE MYSELF

IT CAN'T BE HELPED, THEN.
LET'S ASK THE DEITY.
ASK THE DEITY?
Sounds risky.
HAVEN'T YOU HEARD ABOUT HER, SHUNGA SENSEI?
A CLOSE FRIEND OF MINE, YOU KNOW.
Thank you for the food.
A SEER FROM YOSHIWARA, "KAGARI"
!
Yoshiwara the red light district,
the largest shogunate-licensed pleasure quarter

(T/N mise = shop; oo = big, chuu = medium, ko = small; kashi = riverbank)

Among the brothels, they are ranked as follows: Oo-mise, Chuu-mise, Ko-mise and continued with Kashi-mise.

Similarly, the prostitutes are also graded.

From the highest they are Tayuu, Koushi, Sancha, and Umecha.

(T/N: Travelling Courtesans >> Courtesans dressed up in magnificent costumes and parade slowly in the traditional manner known as Tachimonji)

Of course, in the "Travelling Courtesans" event, those to stride the street in the unique manner called Sotohachimonji manner are Tayuu

OH.

HOUSEN-SENSEI. BRINGING THE PAINTS, IS THERE WORK TO DO?

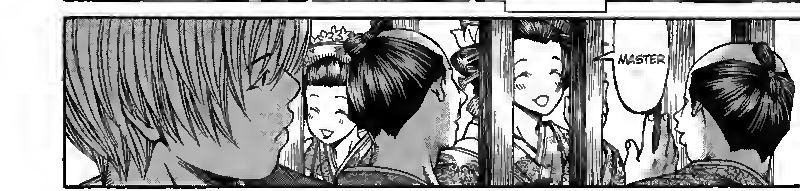
G- GOOD EVENING

THAT ONE IS?

……

M- Mmm ASSISTANT!

SIMPLY PAINTING WOMEN IS BORING, RIGHT?
ONCE IN A WHILE YOU SHOULD USE YOUR "UNDER BRUSH"!
HAHA
In a place established only for men,
Of course.
"UNDER BRUSH" HE SAY
Ke ke
Women can't get in.
I've been here for how many times to draw shunga,
but a place packed with women such as Yoshiwara is more dreadful than beautiful
CHUCKLE
IN REALITY, YOU DISLIKE WOMEN, RIGHT.


MASTER

KAGARI IS A FAMOUS PROSTITUTE
Prostitutes are women who are sold by her family to the red light district and made to do apprenticeship.
OH? IT'S BEEN A WHILE!
But the rumour says,
Kagari's family doesn't owe any debts
GREETINGS

HAH
HAH
AH...
HAH
She wasn't sold to come here.
NN
FUH

She was wished to fall
AAH

BU-HAAAH!
KAGARI IS... HEHE, SHE'S A POPULAR ONE.
WAIT FOR A WHILE, OKAY?
WELCOME, TSUBAKI-SAN.
SNEAKING IN IS NEVER COMFORT-ABLE!
Being Kagari's contractor, Tsubaki arranged her meeting with the landlord Thus
She threw Kagari into this "hell" called Yoshiwara.
WHAT ARE YOU MAKING SUCH A MENACING FACE FOR?
?
"GLANCE"
"Close friend" is astonishing to hear
'Woman's feeling' is something like this, huh?
?
ジロリ

TSUUUU-CHAN!!
DON'T, KAGARI-SAN!
THAT APPEARANCE IS-
stark naked...
THAT FREAK MAKES SUCH A GENTLE FACE.
HAHA, YOU LOOKS HEALTHY
TSUU-CHAN!!
Kyaaaa
THIS IS THE REASON THAT KAGARI,
WHO'S POPULAR AS "ARGUABLY THE PRETTIEST OR SECOND PRETTIEST BEAUTY", CAN'T BE AN OIRAN.

The growth of this beautiful girl's heart and mind have stopped
WHO?
SHUNGA SENSEI
HOUSEN-SENSEI
Only her beauty lives on.
AH...
LOVELY
HOU-SYAN?
STRANGE. I'M NOT AFRAID TO KAGARI

AH. SUDDENLY MY EYES SEEK REFUGEE...
ソワ
ソワ
THIS MOMENT, YOU CAN SEE THE THREAD OF GOD WITHIN HER.
I'M SORRY KAGARI TODAY I DIDN'T COME HERE TO PLAY
EHHH
CLOSE YOUR RIGHT EYE
There's another rumour which boosts Kagari's reputation

CAN I FIND WHAT I'M LOOKING FOR?
E...
AR...
AN EAR
PULLS IN THE TRUTH
THERE'S
THE THREAD OF GOD
AH...

THE EAR
IS POSSESSED BY THE EARLESS HOUICHI
THE EARLESS HOUICHI...?
CORRECT

I'LL COME AGAIN. NEXT TIME, I'LL BRING YOU SWEETS
KAGARI, A CUSTOMER FOR YOU!
WHAT'S THAT?
I-
AH
SWEETS!!
SWEETS!!
PEOPLE SUCH AS SAMURAI AND BIG MERCHANTS WHO HAVE A LOT OF MONEY
COME TO THIS ESTABLISHMENT TO HEAR KAGARI'S ORACLE
.....

STILL WITH THAT MISERLY FACE?
I WAS BORN WITH THIS FACE.
HMM
SENSEI, YOSHIWARA MAY APPEAR AS A "HELL" TO YOU.
BUT THAT PLACE IS A FORTRESS IN ITSELF.
PEOPLE WHO CAN ONLY LIVE IN THAT SAD WORLD ALSO EXIST

SO, KAGARI'S ABILITY,
WILL NEVER BE ABUSED, HUH...?
ニヤリ
WHAT A PAIN, ISN'T IT? REALITY, THAT IS
WHEREVER THE TRUE HELL MIGHT BE
IT'S GATE EASILY OPENS TO ALL PEOPLE
NOW,
LET'S GO HOUSEN-SENSEI
WE HAVE TO FIND ETSU'S EAR, RIGHT?
GO? TO WHERE?

THE GATE OF HELL WILL LEAD THE WAY...
BUT, SO THAT OUR EARS WON'T GET EATEN BY THE DEMON,
LET'S BE CAREFUL
SENSEI
じっ